

and the balance drowned. It was the Navy's worst naval disaster."

Earl was transferred to Oregon, where he was joined by his wife, Jean Moore. Earl and Jean were high-school sweethearts and got married when Earl went home on 30 days' leave. After 45 years of marriage, sadly, Jean passed away in 1989.

Earl was reassigned again, this time to the USS *Bottineau* APA 235, a troop carrier. The ship went to Japan not long after the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They received occupation troops from Honshu, Japan. Earl earned another battle star for an encounter with a Japanese suicide plane in Okinawa Bay. After 2 years, 8 months, and 9 days of faithful service, Earl was discharged in 1946.

Looking back nearly 70 years later, Earl recalls the lessons he's learned. "I was only 17 when I entered service," he says. "I had no idea what I was facing . . . I had no reason to be scared."

"I saw men put in LCVP vessels and sent to do battle on the beach to take the island back from the Japanese. I saw some of the same men brought back in body bags. I saw 450 Japanese planes shot down in the Battle of the Philippine Sea, all in one day. I saw a Japanese Zero so close I could see the orange Japanese flag on the side of the plane. I saw body parts of Japanese soldiers scattered everywhere when I went over the Island of Tarawa. We lost 8,000 Marines of our own. This was my first battle."

Madam President, I am grateful heroes like Mr. Edward Earl Gidcumb are still able to transmit their wisdom and share their stories with the rest of us. The life story of Mr. Gidcumb is certainly inspiring. I know my colleagues in the U.S. Senate join me in thanking him for his valiant service to our country. It is thanks to him and his fellow soldiers that America was able to triumph in World War II and advance freedom and democracy.

COMBATING PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE ACT

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, last week I introduced The Combating Prescription Drug Abuse Act, a bill to create a commission to recommend best practices for preventing and reducing prescription drug abuse. I believe this bill is a necessary step in addressing our Nation's fastest-growing drug problem, which has been classified as an epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

An estimated 52 million people—20 percent of those aged 12 and older—have used prescription drugs for non-medical reasons at least once in their lifetimes. Nearly one-third of people aged 12 and over who used illicit drugs for the first time in 2009 began by abusing a prescription drug. In 2008, the number of opioid pain reliever deaths throughout our population was four times higher than cocaine and heroin deaths combined.

This epidemic ruins the lives of all segments of our population, and the problem is only getting worse, especially for women. Men are still more likely to die of prescription painkiller overdoses—over 10,000 deaths in 2010—but women are tragically catching up. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey earlier this month found a 400 percent increase in women dying from prescription painkiller overdoses between 1999 and 2010, compared to 265 percent among men. During that time, nearly 48,000 women died of prescription painkiller overdoses. In 2010, prescription drugs were involved in 85 percent of the drug-specified deaths among women. And for every woman who dies of a prescription painkiller overdose, 30 go to the emergency room with related complications.

I applaud the unyielding work of the law enforcement and health provider communities in working to address this epidemic, but it is clear that we need to do more. My bill would create a 2-year, 30-member commission led by the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency and Food and Drug Administration tasked with issuing recommendations on how best to reduce prescription drug abuse.

Other members of the commission include representatives from law enforcement, patient groups, pharmacies, dispensers, and community-based organizations, just to name a few. Importantly, both local and Federal stakeholders must be included, from both law enforcement and health care. The commission would be required to hold at least two public hearings to receive input on best practices. The end product would be a report requiring specific recommendations, and again, local input is mandatory.

The time has come to revive the conversation on this critical issue within and among our law enforcement and health care communities and across the Federal/local divide. I am proud that support for this bill is broad, ranging from the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators and the Peace Officers Research Association of California, to the American Academy of Pain Management and the National Association of Chain Drug Stores. I urge my colleagues to support the Combating Prescription Drug Abuse Act.

NATIONAL LAKE APPRECIATION MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, July is National Lake Appreciation Month. This nationwide initiative is sponsored by the North American Lake Management Society, a non-profit organization focused on making partnerships between citizens, scientists, and professionals to protect our Nation's lakes and reservoirs. National Lake Appreciation Month began in 2012 as a way to encourage us to explore and enjoy America's many beautiful lakes, as well as increase efforts to clean and protect them.

In addition to recreational uses such as boating, fishing, and swimming, lakes provide a variety of environmental and health benefits. They absorb rainfall and runoff from land, help prevent floods, provide drinking water, regulate the climate, and provide homes for precious wildlife. The Environmental Protection Agency's National Lake Assessment, conducted in 2007 and again in 2012, revealed that many of our lakes are imperiled due to poor nearshore habitat, too many nutrients, invasive plants and animals, and other threats. By protecting the health of our lakes, we defend the vitality of the animals and plants that depend on them and ensure that we can enjoy them for years to come.

This year, Maryland has joined 23 other States in celebrating National Lake Appreciation Month and in affirming the importance of lakes for our drinking water, energy production, food production, and recreational value. Maryland boasts 60 large lakes over 5 acres in size, and over 100 lakes in total. We use these lakes for fishing, boating, and other outdoor recreation, as well as for energy. For example, Deep Creek Lake, our largest inland lake in Maryland, consists of 65 miles of shoreline, 18 species of fish, and a wide variety of other animal and plant species, some of which are endangered. The lake also powers the Deep Creek Hydroelectric Power Plant, which provides energy not only to Maryland, but also to communities in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. So far we have been able to keep this and other Maryland lakes healthy. In a recent test, it was found that Deep Creek Lake's water clarity was still at a level similar to that of 1957. As factors such as pollutants and runoff increasingly threaten the health of our lakes, it is important that we continue to work to fight against them.

I am pleased to celebrate National Lake Appreciation Month, to encourage people both to enjoy America's beautiful lakes, and to do their part to keep them clean and healthy. Lakes are a very important part of our ecosystem in Maryland. We must continue to increase our efforts to care for our lakes and show our appreciation for all that they provide us.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO STEVE SCHORR

• Mr. HELLER. Madam President, today I wish to recognize Steve Schorr, vice president of public and government affairs for Cox Communications in my home State of Nevada. After more than two-and-a-half decades of dedicated service to his company as well as to the community, Steve is retiring this year. Steve not only leaves a lasting legacy as a leader in broadcasting and in business, but he also enters retirement having made a profound impact as a civic volunteer and